

# TennisPro®



The International Magazine for PTR Tennis Teachers and Coaches

May/June 2020



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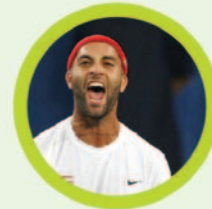
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## FEATURES

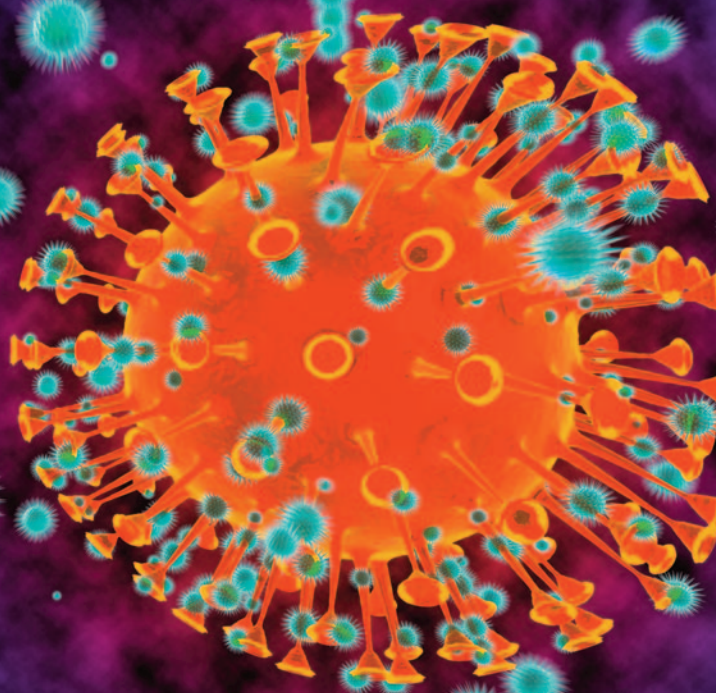
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Cover PTR Hour was one of the first webinars to take place after the COVID-19 shutdown. The cover features photos of those who participated in this well received series that ran for almost two months when most coaches were not working. With most now (or soon to be) back on the court, even under difficult circumstances, PTR created content providing you with online education you needed.

Contents COVID-19 ©Kittipong053/Shutterstock



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## USTA Accreditation has its Benefits We are USTA Accredited

We are pleased to announce that PTR is officially accredited by the USTA! What does that mean for our members in the United States? A lot! Certified PTR US members who have completed their background check, Safe Play, and their continuing education requirement, will receive **FREE** dues for the membership year beginning September 1, 2020. *(Please read the very important message in the box below.)* We are grateful USTA is providing a majority of the dues support with PTR covering the balance.

Most tennis coaches have experienced a COVID-19 work stoppage that has hit their income hard. We believe - now more than ever - that PTR needs to support our coaches who are on the courts full time growing the game. Therefore, the premiums for your general liability insurance coverage will be **FREE** for the upcoming membership year. We hope this is helpful as we all recover from this horrific pandemic.

It has been more than two months since our lives were turned upside-down. I don't want to list the 'no-longer-can-do' items because it's depressing. The optimist in me would rather list the things we can't wait to do again! One thing is the rise in online education. Something to look forward to, right? Thankfully some of you are already back to teaching tennis.

I am a glass half-full person, and fortunately, there are some good things that have come out of this dreadful pandemic. You have daughters, sons, friends who are finishing their academic school year online, and for some it may continue into the next school year. So, will online coach education become the 'new normal'?

Just look at all the online education PTR developed in webinars, podcasts, etc., over the past two months. Our first virtual message was broadcast shortly after the COVID-19 shutdowns started. Dr. Jim Loehr provided PTR members and non-members with three heartfelt and inspirational messages to help us understand and cope with the sudden changes in our lives. If you haven't seen them, I highly recommend you watch these three short, but [powerful videos](#). On April 9th, **PTR Hour** debuted featuring informative and entertaining interviews with current and former pro tennis players and coaches, including Milos Raonic, John Isner, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Genie Bouchard, Belinda Bencic, Jim Courier, Pam Shriver, Lindsay Davenport, James Blake, Chanda Rubin, Brad Gilbert, Judy Murray . . . and the list goes on.

There's no doubt that online education is here to stay. Online education is to face-to-face education as online magazines are to printed publications. My point is twofold. First, you are going to see more online education versus face-to face, and second, from now on your PTR *TennisPro* magazine will be delivered digitally. We realize that both will take some getting used to, especially for Baby Boomers and up, but it's better in so many ways, including for the environment. The timing is right to shift away from 'standard' business practices to be ready for whatever the future may hold.

During the downtime, many members took the time to complete their continuing education requirements by viewing PTR's **FREE** education, or what we like to say, future-ready content. The knowledge gained will enable those coaches to be even better prepared for their students when they get back to the courts. Coaches who elevate their skills will prove to be a positive force in bringing new players to tennis, as well as keeping existing players in the game.

Speaking of new players, we are asking those who take advantage of the **FREE** membership renewal to bring new players to the game. There is a latent demand for sports due to the span of inactivity. There's no better sport to learn than ours! Actually, we see a mini boom in tennis participation because it's such a healthy and safe (social distancing) sport.

In closing, PTR has taken the lead as the first organization to provide online certification for tennis coaches. While the education for our new Level 1 course is available worldwide, online certification is only available outside the USA. So buckle up and get ready for the future of coach education as PTR continues to . . . Make a World of Difference.



*Dan Santorum*  
Dan Santorum  
CEO/Executive Director

### In order to qualify for the grant, PTR members must:

- Teach and reside in the USA
- Be a certified teaching professional in good standing as of October 1, 2020
- Pass Safe Play training, policy terms, and a background screening before October 1, 2020
- Be current with their continuing education requirements.  
For those whose cycle started in 2020, you must have completed at least 4 credits before October 1, 2020
- Make a 'good faith' commitment to introduce tennis to 50 'new' people, be they kids or adults in 2021

**Tennis Industry United Amid COVID-19 Relief. Recover. Rebuild.**

In light of the global health crisis, our entire industry has come together to analyze the most pressing needs and top concerns of all involved. USTA, PTR, USPTA, ITA and TIA collaborated on programs aimed at providing both the immediate and longer term support was needed due to COVID-19. To make resources and information more accessible and easy to understand, the collective assembled a website dedicated to helping you and your business during this troubling time.

This website contains information regarding:

- Financial assistance for businesses and individuals
  - Small business disaster relief
  - Employment resources, unemployment benefits, etc.
  - Facility recovery grants
  - City and Federal Relief programs/financial assistance
  - Additional resources, including sales and marketing
- We hope this website streamlines a complicated situation and alleviates barriers. More information and resources will be published as they are developed. Visit [USTA.com](http://USTA.com) and click the Tennis Industry United menu tab.



**Indian Wells Tennis Garden Partners with UTR**

Universal Tennis, PTR's Partner of the Year Award recipient, has announced a new partnership with Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Indian Wells Tennis Garden will integrate Universal Tennis' technology to support tennis events and programming. Former IWTG Director, Fred Hartzman said, "Universal Tennis is bringing innovation to tennis; and its growth and impact on the sport in a very short period of time is impressive." Visit [MyUTR.com](http://MyUTR.com).



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**Stephens Promoted**

Milena Stephens has been promoted to PTR Director of Development and Diversity. A PTR Professional since 2011, she is certified in all PTR education pathways, and is a PTR Coach Developer.



**HEAD Promotes Two**

Joe Keenan, has served in senior management positions since joining HEAD nine years ago, has been promoted to VP of Sales USA. Jeff Bardsley, a 27 year veteran of HEAD, was promoted to VP of Marketing, North America. HEAD's sponsorship of PTR is one of the longest running in sports history.

**10 Steps to a Perfect Volley**

**Gigi Fernandez 10 Steps to a Perfect Volley e-book**

You can get a free copy of an e-book from Tennis Hall of Famer, Gigi Fernandez. *10 Steps to a Perfect Volley* covers everything from the grip to the recovery step in a photo illustrated easy to read and print e-book. To get yours, visit [gigifernandeztennis.com/perfect-volleys-ebook.html](http://gigifernandeztennis.com/perfect-volleys-ebook.html)

**Dear PTR,**

I attended my first PTR webinar (GameChangers Conference) and want to congratulate you. I've been a member for 20 years, but unfortunately wasn't very active on your platform. With Milena's help I discovered the many instructional lessons and videos for continuing education. Thank you.

**Tomislav Tropp Varazdin, CROATIA**

**Dear PTR,**

This is a good time to complete continuing education hours.

**Arthur Falkson Ithaca, NY, USA**

**Dear PTR,**

I completed the SafeSport requirement. It was very helpful and confirms some of my own practices in my more than 45 years as a coach. The environment is very different now than it was when I started. I believe all coaches should go through some of the training in the various areas covered in the Safe Sport module. Last year I completed one designed by the NFHS National Federation of State High School Associations that dealt with similar topics. I will complete the background check and send that via email. Stay safe and well.

**Bob Manalo Oakland, CA, USA**

**Dear PTR,**

It (Level 2) is truly a quantum leap in education. I am a way better coach for doing this and so proud to be a member and certified professional. As for continuing education, I will keep my eye on the site and see what I can do to continue to learn!

**Tony Bradford Atlanta, GA, USA**

**Dear PTR,**

I am proud to be a PTR member. Thank you for providing me the skills and knowledge to be a better tennis coach!!

**Vincent Liu Baltimore, MD, USA**

**Dear PTR,**

Thank you for the wonderful spring break week! The weather was extraordinary to boot! I also wanted to express my sadness when I saw that you had to cancel weeks 3 and 4. It is an unfortunate situation all around. But as Dan said in an email, "Champions adjust..." At least my teams have good memories of a great week with teammates and good tennis! Thanks again for everything!

**Becky Cecere, Head Coach Penn State Harrisburg Harrisburg, PA, USA**

**Dear PTR,**

It's great that you all thought of me. Thank you very much, it honors me. I have just turned 87 years young, feel very good, work a lot, write special articles and want to write a new book. Unfortunately I do not have the opportunity to present the content of my eleventh book to you. If you hesitate for the next ten years, it may be too late.

Best regards to all of you!!  
**Richard Shönborn Langenhagen, GERMANY**

# Growing and Keeping a Good Junior Development Program



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by Mark Rearden

*Mark is a career tennis professional and is the Director of Tennis at the West Lake Country Club in Augusta, Georgia. He has been a PTR Professional for 20 years and became a USPTA Master Professional in 2016. He is a Specialist in Competitive Player Development and has written articles for Racquet Sports Industry, TennisPro and Addvantage magazines. He has been a Certified Official for most of his 40 plus years in the industry, and has directed or refereed satellite pro tournaments, the ITA Small College National Championships, and countless district and sectional level events.*

Back in February of 2019, I attended the PTR International Symposium. Like always, the classrooms were loaded with wonderful content delivered by some of the best and brightest in our sport. Rubbing elbows with the tennis coaching elite does wonders in terms of your education, but inspirationally you leave with a little more 'glide in your stride'. If you have not been to the Symposium in a while, you need to get there.

As much as the networking and educational opportunities leave you all aglow, 2019 was extra special for me. I was honored to be invited to be one of the presenters. This was exciting and scary at the same time. Like most of you, I am far more comfortable on court with a racquet in hand, barking commands and cheering on students, because by and large that is where we 'get it done'. And, where we are most comfortable.

However, this was not the arena PTR chose for me. I was to be in a classroom with laptop, slide show and laser pointer in hand instead of my trusty tennis racquet. And make no mistake, I was very thankful for the opportunity wherever it was. Most of us can improvise quite a few scenarios on court and can rely on years of impromptu responses, since that is essentially what we do for a living. We fix things on the fly. But now I had the daunting task of being a college professor to what essentially amounts to a bunch of Masters and PhD candidates, all of whom would know if I were bluffing my way through the material. Their expectations would be that this guy they had never heard of was going to take an hour of their life and make them better for having been there. Like I said, daunting.

Once I wrapped my head around the subject matter, it became easier to release myself of the impossible burden of being the smartest person in the room. I've enjoyed junior development throughout my career and it's the subject about which I know the most. But instead of turning it into an episode of This-Is-How-You-Do-It, I decided to offer up what I have found to be the best practices from all of you. I would simply act as the scribe for our honors class and put it all in a palatable form. What follows is the article version of the presentation.

Buckle up, because this is not a short drive.

So, what does it take to grow and maintain a strong junior development program? First, I think we need to quantify what the question actually means. What does it mean to have a strong junior development program? Hopefully, it means more kids coming into the program each season than are leaving it. As they say in sales, you must keep the funnel full. For me however, it also means taking the opportunity to push kids in the right direction, not just improve their tennis game.

A quick side note about attrition, especially kids who are leaving the program. Kids will leave your program for all sorts of reasons. They may age out and head off to college, they may move to another city or location that is no longer convenient to your facility, or they may fall in love with another sport. They may even leave you for a better coach, whether perceived or real.

How you handle people leaving for another local program is critical to your success and to your reputation. You cannot be all things to all people, and I don't say this in a casual flippant manner. When you have given of yourself, missed time with your own family, provided free lessons and lost revenue to go watch a player, who then leaves because, "We need someone who can take him to the next level," or for any other reason, it hurts big time.

But it is so important to understand their reason for leaving and try your best not to burn bridges. If for some reason a parent or player no longer believes in what you are doing, you must be the bigger person. You don't want to give them ammo to use against you. There are a ton of parents who are not good at conflict resolution. Tennis pros as well, but let's set ourselves aside for the moment. It is often easier for parents to embellish a story and become angry than to resolve things in a manner that allows for a return to your program if the pastures are not so green elsewhere. Don't be that pro who must explain why you are better than somebody else across town. Guess what, **you are better** than they are, but maybe not to the student in question. Bottom line, it doesn't matter. It's like we tell the kids in our program, "It's not a question of whether there will be stress, it's how we respond to it."

I know what you're thinking. "It's time to cut to the chase, to move into the meat of the article. Let's get to it Mark, tell me things that will help me make my junior development program the best it can be." OK, but before we can begin, you need to know what will be required of you.

You will need to spend more hours at work than you did before. In all likelihood, you will spend more weekends at the club or on the road with the kids. And while you are at work, you'll have much less dead time, because in order to succeed at this, you must plan ahead. Your time in front of the computer will start to look a bit different. Instead of searching for the latest hilarious meme, now you will be staying up on tournament regulations, finding new fun drills and games, and in general, continuing to upgrade your skill set with the kids. **The days of winging it are gone for good.** You must hit the courts with a plan in mind every single day. You must get okay with phone calls from parents after you get home and from kids who are at tournaments. Bottom line is you must be ALL-IN.

So why in the world would anyone sign up for all of this? (If it gives you pause, it should.) Hopefully, it's because you love being on court with the kids. Maybe years ago someone turned you on to something (tennis perhaps) that made you feel passionate, and now you want to give back or pay it forward, so to speak. A less altruistic reason may be because you rarely see a club with a great junior program that doesn't also have an active adult program. Ultimately, there's little that is more rewarding than pushing kids in the right direction and using this great game as the vehicle to get them there.

So, here we go. Everything starts with the schedule. You must be dependable week in and week out. You must be on time and what that really means is you must be early, on court before the players are. Look for a reason to make the lesson happen rather than a reason to cancel it. Offer another day and time if you get rained out or if harsh weather is expected. And make sure players get the entire hour or 90 minutes or two hours. Parents notice every single time you pick up balls early. The kids and parents need to know that you *want* to be on court with them.

Consistency in how you run a clinic or lesson is as important as a consistent schedule. You need several segments that are the same from week to week. It may be how the warm-up is done or what everyone must do upon arrival. Conducting parts of the lesson the same way consistently creates a sense of team, something that ties the players together. When a new player joins the group, any one of the team can show the new arrival how we do things. It's often a good idea to have one of the lower ranked players do this to ensure all the players feel they are an integral part of the team.

Another area tied to clinic consistency is that of discipline. Naturally, we each have our own style and our own way of keeping everyone in line. But players need to know where the line is and what to expect if they cross it. As the coach it is up to you to establish and communicate boundaries. There is a time for serious work and a time for a bit more playfulness. If the kids are made aware of what the day's work will look like, no one will be surprised when you are intolerant of horsing around. They will be better able to read what you are looking for each day. Now, of course, they may not give you that, but at least when you ask them to 'sit out' for a few minutes they won't be bewildered at why.

*(continued on Page 6)*

The upside to having a junior program with good numbers is obvious. The challenge though is to make sure there is a very fair and systematic pathway from one group level to the next. First and foremost, the rules must be the same for everyone. If you can abide by that, you can save yourself a ton of heartache. The rules for movement must be easy to understand and have as little ambiguity as possible.

When a new person joins your program and if there is any doubt about the player's level, entry should always be in the weaker group. For those of you who have already made this mistake, you know why. It's very easy to tell a parent, "Wow, I had no idea your child was this good. We need to move him to a stronger group." Easy-peasy right? Now let's try that in the other direction. Doesn't work so well does it?

For similar reasons it's important to delay moving a player to a higher skilled group until you are absolutely certain it is time for them to move. The rationale is at least twofold: most parents are evaluating what you do with their child based on what you did with someone else's, and worse, you now have to inform them it's *your* fault for moving their kid too soon. And quite often you'll have to handle that wonderful conversation that begins, "My son plays better against stronger players and will improve faster. I think we will leave him in the stronger group." Time to put on your diplomat hat and figure out a way to say, "No, your son just looks better losing in the stronger group." No fun at all for the coach, parent or player.

Most of us who have taught tennis for awhile have a pretty extensive data base of drills. And that is good news in that you likely can engineer any number of scenarios to work on whatever the day's task dictates. Unfortunately, it also makes us vulnerable to believing we can run the program on the fly. Trust me here, you cannot and be successful. **You have to do LESSON PLANS.**

You need an outline of what you want to accomplish for the upcoming season. This is your view from 10,000 feet. You will also have short term goals for the group and a daily lesson plan that helps you get there. A daily lesson plan keeps you focused on what you want to achieve and doesn't let you get distracted by running the drills that are the easiest. Once you get your plan organized, you will then need to have a fall back plan, what you will do if your numbers don't allow you to do the prepared lesson plan. Once you begin doing lesson plans and formulating big picture and short term goals, you will start running clinics and lessons with much more specificity. This is where you will focus more attention on the details of player development.

Once you have the lesson plan in place, it seems reasonable that devising homework for the student comes next. Tennis homework has to be matched to the player, their ability and their level of commitment. And make it definable - a period of time, a number of baskets or maybe a match. There must be specificity. You cannot be vague. "I need you to work on your forehand," will not get it done. And when the time comes, at the next lesson for example, you have to ask if they did it. Believe it or not, everyone wants you to expect something of them.

Yeah, but how do I get them to do it? Having some strategies already in place will help. One short term solution might be that they have to accomplish their homework in order to get to take their next lesson. You might be surprised at what a great motivator that can be. A long term strategy might involve rewards - getting a certain number of sets or baskets of serves done in order to take a fun road trip to Six Flags or the NCAAs. And you must be willing to *not* give them the lesson if they didn't do what they were supposed to. Once they realize you are serious about holding them accountable, most will acquiesce and do the work.

Do you remember in the movie *The Shining* when Jack Nicholson's character wrote, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"? The same holds true for your tennis program. Do parties and social functions have a place in a junior development program? Well of course they do! Bottom line is, they are *kids* and if they are asked to treat their tennis development as a job, they will not be as invested. It is imperative to add some parties and social aspects to your program.

These sorts of functions allow the parents to see you care beyond just the tennis. It also gives parents an opportunity to help in an area where they may be better than you are in organizing social events. Parties also help to bond the group beyond tennis. One of the fun aspects about parties and social functions is that it no longer matters who the best player is. It may be who won the crazy game you set up for them or who ate the most cupcakes is now the big deal. The tennis pecking order no longer matters.

Taking pictures is mandatory. It's so easy nowadays. Everyone likes seeing a picture of themselves posted somewhere, especially if someone else does it. It's also a way to show the parents you care enough to go the extra mile. With parents any extra effort on your part is a win. And depending where you post it, it may be good for your business. It's the little things that separate you from the rest of the pros out there.

Do you know your teaching philosophy, particularly when it concerns kids? For a long time, I didn't. I just went out there, and tried to give a great lesson every time and thought it was enough. And it might have been at the time, but to move the needle forward you cannot leave any aspect undone. If you have a website or brochure your philosophy should be on there. Keep it simple, hopefully something that shows you put the child first. Parents want to know this, so have it on the tip of your tongue. It should never give you pause if someone asks you for it. This philosophy should drive everything you do as a tennis pro.

Staying in touch with parents does a lot to cement your relationship and keeps them abreast of what is happening.

- Use emails and texts to keep them aware of basic info like weather, times, schedules or changes in the game plan.
- Make a phone call to say thanks for a kindness (gift card or cookies) or to compliment them on something their child did out of the ordinary.
- Use a phone call to set up a meeting or to discuss a disciplinary issue. They need to hear your voice and understand inflection in this situation.
- Conduct parent meetings for your tournament level kids to sell the programs, talk about the upcoming season, and to help them become comfortable with each other.
- Use time in your car to make a call that will save you time and win you brownie points. (Do not text and drive!)

Another area that has to be addressed is that of play days. These are simply days where you schedule periodic times for the kids to come out and play games, matches or fun competition. Many of the kids in your program will either not be ready for tournament play or perhaps they don't really want to do the competitive thing. Regardless of their commitment, you have to provide them with a venue to do something with the skills they have learned during their private lesson and clinic time. The things you do with them will naturally vary depending on their skill level and their level of commitment.



Generally, a team atmosphere works best for entry level players. At this level of play it is more important to have fun than to determine who is the top dog. Controlled chaos is best. We like lots of noise, lots of running and tons of games where it is team against team. It doesn't have to be 100% about tennis skills either. It just needs to be fun. Every 6-8 weeks works out to be pretty good spacing. You don't have to provide food, but sitting at a table eating with a ton of kids will often lead to some good memories.

With the competitive kids, you certainly need match play. We schedule Exchange Matches with other clubs at least twice a year. Occasionally, putting together an 'Academy Challenge' or some kind of match play against each other that can be tournament-like or as a team competition. This area frequently gets neglected, because often kids within the same group won't play matches with each other unless forced to do so. Don't forget fun games with the more competitive kids as well. This can give the less skilled kids the chance to be the winner as well. Again, the chance for funny conversation or a different level of relationship can develop when sitting around a banquet table, so don't assume these kids don't want to scarf down a bunch of cupcakes. They do!

One of the things we do for the kids, albeit by chance sometimes, is create memories. I think you start with things that the pros create. If you do a particular workout each year, give the kids the chance to put together a workout music list that can be played during the clinic. Often a particular song or lyric becomes part of their mantra. Taking the kids to an event that is special is good, like Six Flags, a pro tourney or a local college match. Road trips with the pros almost always create special memories. Creating nicknames makes the kids feel special, but be careful to make sure it is something playful and fun, not poking fun. Giving the kids a bit more latitude at tournaments is also a way to get them engaged with the group. Again, you have to make sure everyone knows where the line is and keep them on this side of it.

**Allowing the kids to create some memories** is one of the best ways to go here. And you don't have to worry, they will come up with stuff. Guys will tend to be gross and girls cute and generally clever. Ugly Sock Day is easy and doesn't push any boundaries. When we were in a restaurant, the kids I taught seemed to like telling the waiter it was my birthday, whether it was or not. I generally celebrated my birthday 3-4 times every road trip. You can also give them some ownership, for example, we let players select the warm-up for a clinic or what we would do for fitness on a given day. For the older kids, letting them plan an excursion for the group is always fun. Sometimes this gives someone other than the best player an opportunity to stand out.

Mentoring is one of the key elements to help perpetuate your program. Younger kids look up to older kids. Do your best to get those who are most personable involved with play days for the younger players in your program. It also provides an opportunity for the older kids who are not as talented to shine. Encourage the older kids to learn the names of some of the munchkins and speak to them during their comings and goings at the facility. It is especially important for those who are playing tournaments. When older players ask the younger kids how they played or when they play again does a lot to keep them motivated, since it is apparent that someone besides their pro and family is noticing them.

I doubt there is a whole lot of original thought left out there, and most of us are borrowing and using good ideas from pros who do it well already. And after you swipe a few good ideas, share them with others. Let's keep this thing going.

- Start with the old timers. They have likely forgotten more than you know. Don't get bogged down with how much you know about the 'modern game'. Most of it just gets down to hard work. The older pros have learned from doing just that.
- Seek out the pros who are fun to be around. They are probably that way on court as well. Making it fun, especially for the young ones, keeps the kids coming back.
- Call the pros who have had a good stream of players for years. They are successful for a reason. Most are willing to share the secret to their success. And most of the time it wasn't a secret. They were just willing to go the extra mile.
- Talk to that cocky so-and-so across town. Ask him what he did to make his program successful. He'll probably tell you way more than you want to hear and may even be a bit condescending to you once he believes you are asking for advice. But so what. You are just trying to learn how to do your craft better. Learn from every source. Don't limit yourself to the pros who are humble and easy to be around.

So there we have it. A not so short essay. There is not one idea in this entire article I can claim originated from the mind of Mark Rearden. I molded some, tweaked some and overhauled some, but I got all of it from other pros. And that is one of the reasons I am sharing it with you. I have field tested everything I have referenced, but don't have all of it in place all of the time. Our jobs require us to cut and paste, cut and replace, even cut and delete. It's what we do, but as long as it's about the kids, we will be successful. Thanks for reading.



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# PAQ - The Communication Code

## Your Guide to Effective Methods of Communication



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by Margot Carter

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For a coach, quality communication is essential. Without it, the ability of others to understand and learn from us is vastly reduced. Communication is the method by which people transfer knowledge, which, when done well, results in learning and understanding. There are many ways of dissecting communication, and in this article, we'll look at the PAQ code with its three or four (depending how you look at it) essentials for a coach to adapt and adjust our language in a manner that will help us to become more effective coaches. The purpose of this article is to offer you some indicators toward greater effectiveness.

Before we even get to PAQ, it's important to understand the 'psychological safety', or simply put, trust. The people you are coaching must be receptive to you, and the concept of psychological safety is important because people must feel as though they can answer your questions or ask new questions without fearing a threat to their dignity. If a player doesn't understand something, s/he must feel comfortable enough to question what is being said. An essential way to cultivate this feeling of trust is for the coach to be humble, positive and receptive to the people they are coaching.

### Part 1 of The Code Positive

Positive communication has a tendency to come under fire, so it is incredibly important to understand that this does not mean to simply be a cheerleader coach, as many studies show that being an instructional coach is linked to higher levels of athlete satisfaction.

Positive communication simply means to phrase all comments as solutions, and to do this effectively, you must understand the problem that is to be solved, but not to focus on it. A good coach will identify the problem, point it out only if necessary, and then focus on the solution. Focusing on solutions is essential. We are always telling our players to have a positive mental attitude, but often we are not coaching this way. If we can help them to think in terms of solutions, our players will develop good mental habits and eventually will become their own positive influences.

How often do you hear players say to themselves, "Don't hit it into the net" or "Stop hitting it out"? How often have you seen a coach tell 6-year-old kids to stop a bad movement for it only to get worse? The problem here is telling someone (or yourself) to stop a negative motion only brings it to the forefront of their mind, so we visualize and think about the negative, and not the solution. Everything that is said, whether by the coach or by our own internal dialog, can be the solution rather than the problem. Training ourselves - and our players - to think in solutions can be life changing.

A recent Stanford University study demonstrated that even after IQ and other factors were considered, a positive attitude toward math actually predicts performance! Attitude can be as important as IQ. Not only that, the positive attitude actually stimulated the part of the brain that is associated with memory and learning. Of all the studies that can be found on positive attitude as a coaching philosophy, surely this is one of the most powerful.

*Having a positive attitude  
acts directly on your memory and learning system.*  
- Lang Chen, PhD

In the first paragraph, we explored how a good coach will identify a problem, point it out if necessary, and then focus on the solution. However, an even more effective route is to use your power of observation for a little longer. Sit back and watch the player for a while, identify a problem, and then hopefully identify a time when the player has done it well, so you can point out that the player already has the ability to do it correctly, and must simply do *that* more consistently. How empowering it is to be able to tell your player that you have seen them do it already, rather than simply telling them what to do.

### Self Determination Theory

This theory is complex, but simply put, it delves into the motivation behind the choices people make without external influence, intrinsic motivation. Koka, Haggart, et al. found that the effects of perceived autocratic behavior and negative non-verbal feedback were direct and negative, whereas teaching, instruction and situational consideration were direct and positive, which means that good positive teaching will help your students become more self-motivated. The power we have as coaches often goes unappreciated, however it is things like this in our daily behaviors that we can always be working on to become more effective in assisting our players. Social context can either support or thwart natural tendencies toward active engagement and psychological growth. It's easy to blame the player for not trying hard enough, but we are responsible for our role to help them become motivated, by being a positive, confident, visionary leader.

*Once you replace negative thoughts with **positive ones**,  
you'll start having **positive results**.*

- Willie Nelson

### Part 2 of The Code Adaptable

As coaches and communicators, it is important to understand that the people we are training will perceive our explanations in different ways. We must pay attention not only to what we are saying, but how the information is being received. If we get stuck using the same phrases to explain tactical or technical aspects of our sport, we eventually become white noise to our players. If we rephrase the same thing five times, everyone will find a different description to focus on, and it is this adaptability that allows us to connect with many different people. Again, we fall back on the power of observation. If we are trying to coach someone on a specific move, and find that our phrase is not working, rather than repeating ourselves, observe what is happening with the player, and rephrase your advice accordingly. It is our job as coaches and the communicators to deliver the message in a way that the player is able to understand the changes that need to be made. Again, there are times when it can be easy to blame the player, but it is up to us to adapt and rephrase our language.

There are many ways to be adaptable in our language, and one of my personal favorites is the use of analogies. Analogies help people to build conceptual bridges between what is familiar and what is new. I have so many that I use, but I will share one. I was working with a woman who was waiting for the ball to bounce before even setting her racquet. No amount of asking her to prepare earlier was working, resulting in late contact points every single time. So I stopped for a water break, and asked her about Thanksgiving dinner. I asked her when her guests were arriving, when she had bought the turkey, when it went in the oven, and when she set the table, among many other questions. I expressed surprise at the turkey going in the oven that morning when dinner was that evening, why so soon? Why not wait until the guests arrive? Of course, the turkey wouldn't be ready and it would have made dinner late. It was at this moment, when she was looking at me like I was a lunatic, that I gave her a little wink and started to explain the similarity between her turkey going in the oven that morning and my request for her to set the racquet as soon as she knew whether it was going to be a forehand or a backhand. From that day on, although we still had to work on timing and early preparation, the message had been received and we had laid the groundwork for much simpler communication going forward.

In a study by Glynn, et al. in 1989, it was found that 75% of college students were only able to solve a problem using previously learned information, *after* it was suggested to them how they should apply this information. That is to say that analogies require the guidance of a good coach to help players bridge the gap.

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# Playing with Numbers

## Planning Outcomes with Quality in Mind



by Dr. John C. Panepinto

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With the help of technology, data on many aspects of performance are not hard to find. The proliferation of measurements of performance extend from individual goal sheets to the greater forums of the media. Highlights, standings, rankings and analytics focus on what happened or go deeply to specific aspects of performance such as swing speed or RPM. Yet far less inquiry examines qualities of execution or how and why an outcome occurred. The widespread focus on the production and quantitative side of performance has consumed attention - narrowly. And it is not going away anytime soon.

To illustrate one such quantitative measure with a different sport, a real time app tracked 'win probability' for an NFL football game (Kansas City Chiefs vs. Tennessee Titans). The visual well describes the contrast between data points, trends, and outcome. Kansas City was in the lead and maintained a high probability of winning over 95% of the time of measurement - including nearly a 99% win probability in the last few minutes... And lost.



Similarly, in the world of tennis, Rafa Nadal's comeback from being down a match point and 5-1 against Daniil Medvedev in the third set of the 2019 Nitto ATP Finals also see-saws the win probability chart. To that point, here's how the world of data explains outcome (see DataGenetics.com). 'Win probability' in tennis is explored from several perspectives, such as winning a point, game, set or tiebreaker. But for the equations to 'work' the calculations ignore context in the form of human variability. This is the narrow focus within a large field mentioned above with the qualities of process left out of the overall picture. To calculate probability without the 'messiness' of life, the following assumptions are made (*note that words from the article are in quotes, my observations are in parentheses*):

- "Probability remains fixed" (ignore shifts in momentum and the variability of each individual's level of play during the match)
- "Ignore fatigue, stamina" (eliminate aspects of physical preparation, nutrition, the impact of stress on states, and overall level of condition)
- Ignore "modifications" (ignore players' capacity for learning and adapting)
- Ignore "the advantage of serving" (ignore the variation of skills and experience)
- Ignore "psychological pressure" (ignore the qualities of the performance mindset and the experience of players).

Plainly, Rafa chose *not* to ignore these assumptions and carried on in a 'lively' form. Maybe a central issue becomes a bit clearer when we look at an essential difference between quality and quantity or process and product - *life*. In other words, once you include something non-machine, a closed and measurable clockwork system becomes only an extreme simplification, a narrowly focused snapshot of an open, living and complex system.

Data and measurables are fine and arise from the push and pull of performance and a need to know. While they inform planning, other aspects of goal setting such as expectations, enhancements, desire, development, assignments, capability and responsibilities are just as critical. Planning needs to include a sense of quality within a larger context - all the aspects mentioned in the parentheses in the bullet points. Simply, *how* and *why* you are moving toward an outcome matters for a vital source of motivation is at stake.

And there is a difference in focus - where attention is intended when process is included. Data-informed plans monitor the question of What? Quality is about How and Why? Which brings us to these important principles:

*The quality of the process is directly related to the quality of the product.*

*Performing/executing is 100% process (a **verb** in the present); product is the outcome of process (an **object**, something static, something with no process left, or a number generated by a formula, category, or definition).*

Since outcome is measured at the end or specific points of the process, plans that focus only on products miss valuable opportunities to engage the quality of performance and leverage growth. Outcome goals often have the feel of 'push' as they may come from coaches, parents, comparisons or benchmarks, what has already been measured, or top down in an organization or system. A plan of 'just win' or focused only on the trophy can create enough push to overwhelm performance with stress and the fear of loss.

Importantly, because of the 'object' nature of products (points won, games won, sets won) there is a sense of having something to lose even though you have *nothing* to begin with. This trick of thinking (because it is narrowly extracted from quality, the whole and the process) is intimately tied to manipulation and our need to control (to have a desired product in the future). But there is nothing to manipulate because you have nothing (no product, no measurable outcome) to begin with. This creates a void, a condition that is the very core of fear - loss.

Another aspect of focusing on data and outcomes that often is felt, but not clear in mind, is what remains *outside* the field of attention. Focus on product may bring some sense of control. But it negates the aspect at the core of every facet of motivation - feeling alive. This is the sense of playing, competing, being in flow, present in the moment or engaged in any activity just because it is inherently joyful and meaningful. Watching Roger Federer practice is the embodiment of this quality. Lack of this quality of being is a main reason why young players exit sports or 'feel' pushed out. On the other hand, if you listen to the themes of those who have reached or come close to goals without enjoying the journey, their words reveal a sense of *relief* as if the outcome were only something to endure. Or why second-place finishers may feel like failures.

Quality and process planning create an intrinsic pull and inform a sense of improvement and evolution - for coaches, players, and programs. Focus on process goes straight to the source of motivation: our need to grow and improve, fulfilling the basic need for competence. It speaks to involvement - another form of basic need at the deepest level - real-time investment in self.

*(continued on Page 12)*

## Playing with Numbers

This concept is something to consider in the planning process. Ask:

- What are my process goals? In what areas do I need to improve the quality of thinking, processing, and executing?
- What qualities create a sense of pull to the future and engage this intrinsic drive?
- How do I embody the experience of the process of practice and improving?
- In what areas of performance do I feel or not feel a sense of flow?
- What do I focus on when practicing? When practicing, can I explain what I am attending to in the moment? Does the experience have an enlivened, open, playful, intent quality?
- What are the obstacles to process-focused planning?
- What aspects do I need to change or develop in my performance mindset?

We can't get better without doing something at a higher level, thinking at a higher level, and becoming more capable and competent. And competing reveals these *qualities* at the point of performance. This process is evolutionary and aligned with what we have seen in the world of sport on many levels all along. What was once seen as a limit of performance, becomes a force that *pulls* us, and a way to discover the limitless within us.

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## PAQ - The Communication Code

### Part 3 of The Code Questions

Asking your players questions is so much more powerful than preaching to them. Leading people to the answer by guided questioning will not only assist in their retention of the information, it will also empower them to realize that they can actually solve their own problems. This will also help build the 'psychological safety' or trust between coach and player that we explored at the very beginning. There are times when simply asking why something went wrong that will lead the player to the root cause of the problem, helping them to understand their goals and how to achieve them.

For example, a simple why conversation.

Coach - *Why did you miss that?*

Player - *I opened my racquet face and lifted up.*

Coach - *Yes, but why did that happen?*

Player - *I was late.*

Coach - *Yes why?*

Player - *I didn't move my feet.*

(A cookie cutter answer that s/he was hoped would be correct.)

Coach - *Actually your feet were moving well, so what else could it be?*

Player - *I was too close to the ball.*

Coach - *Yes, why?*

Player - *My preparation was late!*

Coach - *Bingo! We had good feet, but late prep, so let us work on that.*

All the initial problems in this story, except for the footwork, were genuine things that had gone wrong with the stroke, but focusing on those things would not have actually fixed the problem. By talking the player down to the very root of the problem, she actually solved her own problem, and with some guidance was able to clearly understand why the next phase of the lesson was to focus on early preparation. Of course, from the coach's perspective, it's important to have spent a little time observing the player to be able to guide the conversation through questions that create the correct responses.

You are probably familiar with the Socratic Method, cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals based on asking and answering questions which actually stimulates critical thinking and helps to draw out ideas. Socrates and his method not only encourage these types of conversations to foster learning and understanding, but he was the master of humility; for a humble person will always seek more knowledge, but someone who assumes they know it all, will not learn new things! The Swiss, who have been known to turn out many top quality players, have this as their Tennis Motto, "If you only do what you already can, then you will always be what you are today."

For those of you who have not read *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle, read it. There is a small exercise in the book that has two lists of words, one list the words are all spelled correctly and in the second the letters are jumbled. It asks you to read the lists and on the next page to try to remember as many of the words as you can. Invariably the brain remembers the words with the letters jumbled, as it has to work a little harder to figure out what the words are. The act of forcing ourselves to think little longer about a problem and actually work it out, has an immediate result on our retention; and by having these types of critical thinking dialogues with our players, they are learning more effectively.

We all deal with very varied players who learn and understand in different ways. One of the beauties for me is when people understand, learn and improve as a direct result of my coaching. If they don't, an easy option would be to somehow blame the player's inability to learn, but I believe that no matter the player, it is up to us to adjust our communication to help them succeed. It is this problem-solving process that I find so fun about coaching. PAQ works for me, might it work for you too? I hope so.

*No matter the player, it is up to us, as coaches,  
to adjust our communication to help them succeed.*  
- Margot Carter

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*Mike Mooney*



**Sweet Briar College**  
Sweet Briar, Virginia  
*Dustin Hale*



**Thomas College**  
Waterville, Maine  
*Rob Disch*



**Thomas More Univ.**  
Crestview Hills, Kentucky  
*Shawn Barone*



**Tiffin University**  
Tiffin, Ohio  
*Phil Conley*



**Union College**  
Schnectady, New York  
*Brian Bowman*



**University of Lynchburg**  
Lynchburg, Virginia  
*Chris Johnson*



**Univ. of Minnesota Morris**  
Morris, Minnesota  
*Miranda Brown*



**Univ. of Missouri St. Louis**  
St. Louis, Missouri  
*Rick Gyllenberg*



**University of Mount Union**  
Alliance, Ohio  
*Jeff Wojtowicz*



**University of St. Thomas**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
*Ken Cychosz*



**University of Tampa**  
Tampa, Florida  
*Al DuFaux*



**Virginia Wesleyan College**  
Norfolk, Virginia  
*Marty Perry*



**Warner University**  
Lake Wales, Florida  
*Jose Martinez*



**Waynesburg University**  
Waynesburg, Pennsylvania  
*Ron Headlee*



**Webster University**  
St. Louis, Missouri  
*Amy O'Briend, Michael Siener*



**West Liberty University**  
West Liberty, West Virginia  
*Heather Gallagher, Ron Hulewicz*



**West Virginia State University**  
Institute, West Virginia  
*Ryan Pulliam*



**Western Connecticut State Univ.**  
Danbury, Connecticut  
*Shawn Stillman*



**Western Illinois University**  
Macomb, Illinois  
*Shawn Hyden*



**Western New England Univ.**  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
*Jennifer Kolins*



**Westminister College**  
New Wilmington, Pennsylvania  
*Dave Hayden*



**Wilkes University**  
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania  
*Torr Terranova*



What an unusual Spring TennisFest 2020 was. COVID-19 uncertainty led to full blown shelter in place orders. But for two weeks, Hilton Head Island was filled with college tennis players. Two high schools even planned to get in on the action - May River in Bluffton, South Carolina, and Valley View from Germantown, Ohio. Then everything ground to a halt. The health and welfare of everyone far outweighed the desire to compete. Even though not every team was able to play, we want to thank all the PTR coaches who brought teams. We hope you, your players and all of your families are well and we look forward to seeing you next year!



# Relieving Low Back Pain



*by Patrick Aubone, M.S.*

*Patrick is the Director of Men's Tennis at Dunwoody Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia. He has a Masters Degree in Psychology specializing in children and adolescent crisis. He has certifications from EXOS, The Human Performance Institute and iTPA. He still competes at the national and local level while continuing his growth and development as a coach and director.*

Low back pain is about as common if not more so than knee pain. Tennis players from the professional level to the recreational level all experience some sort of back pain during their playing career. For some players the pain is because of overuse or strain, others it's a lack of flexibility and core strength. Stretching, core strengthening as well as other treatment modalities are recommended to decrease and/or eliminate any back pain being experienced.

One of the main causes of low back pain is sitting down. The majority of jobs today require individuals to sit down for up to 8 hours a day. Increasing flexibility in the low back, glutes, and hamstrings will help reduce low back pain. Low back begins as early as 11 years old and increases by up to 50% by the age of 15 in some adolescents. (Burton 1996). Back pain is more common in boys than girls especially those that participate in sports. Most long term studies suggest that high muscular strength appears not to be a strong predictor of low back pain. Incorporating strength and flexibility may be an important component in preventing chronic low back pain.

There are various ways to strengthen the lower back in order to reduce the pain. In recent years Yoga and Pilates have become popular with players such as Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic incorporating them into their training routines. The Pilates method is a system of exercises which emphasize recruitment and strengthening of the core muscles, flexibility, and breathing to promote stability and control of movement. (Joyce 2017). Pilates exercises address both the muscular and neural function. Currently research supports the Pilates method as a treatment for low back pain. In a recent study conducted in the military, researchers concluded that Restorative Exercise and Strength Training for Operational Resilience and Excellence (RESTORE), which includes 9-12 individual Yoga sessions for an 8 week period, is a viable nonpharmacological treatment for low back pain with minimal side effects.

Other treatment modalities that can help with low back pain include electric muscle stimulation, massage, foam rolling and trigger point therapy. Combining any of these modalities with strength training and flexibility will go a long way toward reducing the low back pain. Before starting any new training program please consult with a physician. It is important to consider past injury history before beginning a new program, let the instructor or trainer know ahead of time of any concerns you may have.

### 3 Takeaways

1. Low back pain begins at a young age and is more common in the athletic population.
2. Yoga and Pilates are two methods that can help strengthen the lower back and core as well as relieve low back pain by incorporating stretching.
3. Try to avoid sitting for extended periods of time. Standing up and walking or stretching for 5 minutes on the hour is one way to reduce low back pain throughout the day.

### Sources

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# Changeover

## Conversion of Courts from Tennis to Pickleball



courtesy of Fred Kolkmann Tennis & Sport Surfaces, LLC, Grafton, WI

by Mary Helen Sprecher

*Mary Helen has been the technical writer for more than 25 years with the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA), the national association of designers, builders and suppliers of materials for athletic facilities, and as such, has written for a variety of magazines in the sports and fitness industry. Sprecher has written on various topics relating to sports facility design, construction and supply, as well as sports medicine and health issues. She is also a contributing editor to Racquet Sports Industry Magazine and is the former editor of Sports Destination Management.*

*Previously, she was a full-time newspaper reporter in Baltimore, Maryland and has been an instructor in the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies at Goucher College, where she taught meeting and event planning courses.*

If, like many club pros, you've made the decision to bring pickleball on board, you know there are multiple reasons, and multiple options, for doing so.

But it's also important to be realistic. Pickleball players have more opportunities for playing on dedicated courts these days and if you want to remain competitive (and keep your pickleball players as well), it will necessitate some changes to your facility.

This is the second of a two-part article covering two issues of PTR Tennis Pro. Our previous article detailed the practice of lining existing courts for pickleball in order to allow continued play in both sports. This article details conversion of tennis courts to pickleball courts on a permanent basis.

As you proceed, it's likely you'll have questions - and plenty of them. Here are some of the FAQs, as well as answers, from members of the American Sports Builders Association, the professional organization for those involved in the design, construction and supply of materials and equipment to the sports industry.

### Can My Existing Tennis Courts Be Used?

Good question. It is possible to use the same court and net; however, it is not ideal. The courts vary greatly in size. You already know that a tennis court is 36 by 78 feet (the space within the playing lines) and 60 by 120 feet (the playing area plus the area outside the lines). A pickleball court, however, is significantly smaller than a tennis court; 20 by 44 feet for the court size, with a total minimum playing area of 30 by 60 feet. The playing lines are also quite different.

At the very least, a resurfacing job will be in order to create a clean playing surface that shows only pickleball lines. [The resurfacing will create a better aesthetic for the new court(s), avoiding the patchwork look that comes from simply trying to paint over existing lines and put down new ones.]

### Do I Need to Buy Another Net?

Those who want tennis courts to host only one pickleball court can use their existing net- with some modifications. A pickleball net is three feet (36 inches) high at the sidelines and 34 inches at the center. A tennis net is three feet, six inches (42 inches) at the posts and three feet (36 inches) at the center.

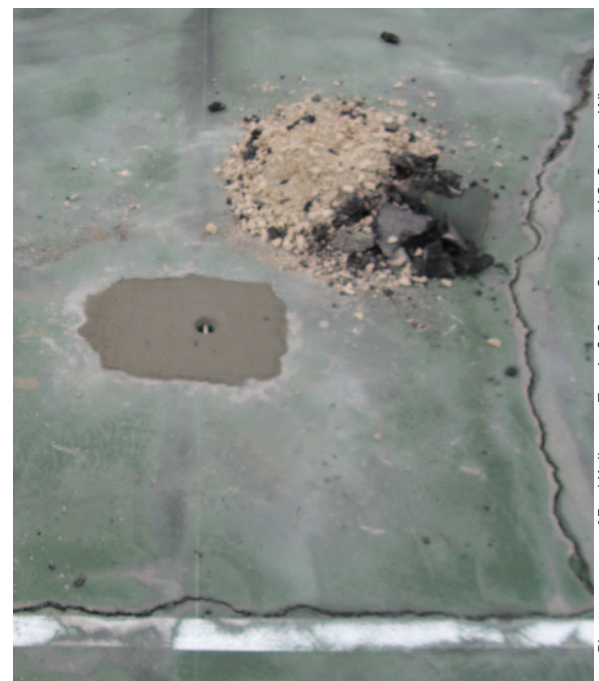
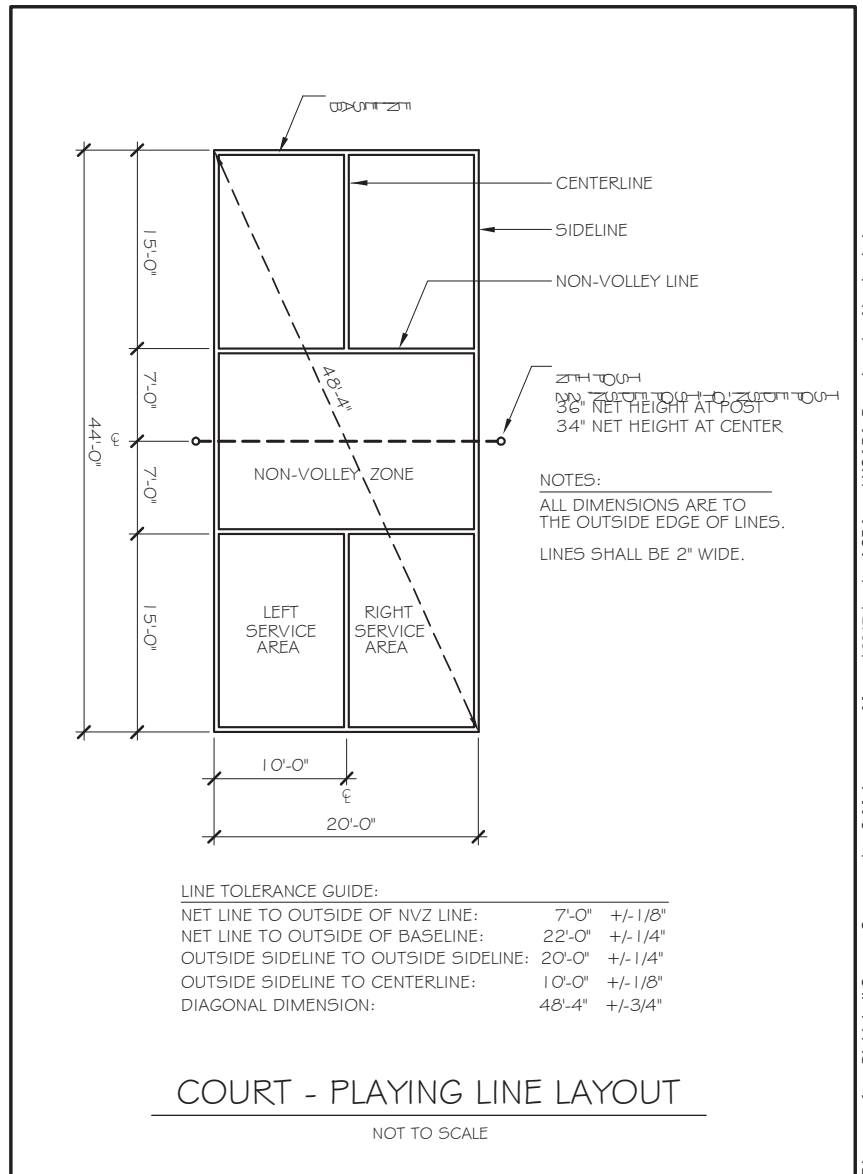
"The existing tennis net is too high to meet pickleball regulations," notes Greg Nichols, CTCB, of Premier Surface Solutions Inc., Tallahassee, Florida. "A tennis net needs to be 36 inches from the court surface at the center, and a pickleball net needs to be 34 inches. This is not a critical issue for recreational play, however serious pickleball players will want to add a system to lower the net to the proper height which can be purchased and easily installed and removed."

Referring back to the original point about pickleball players having more opportunities for dedicated courts - and to not being satisfied with playing on tennis courts - it's likely you'll want to think about new nets in the interest of keeping your players happy.

One key consideration for this is the width of a tennis court (and subsequently, the tennis net) vs. the width of a pickleball court and net. According to International Tennis Federation (ITF) rules, nets for tennis courts must be 27 feet wide for singles matches and 36 feet wide for doubles matches. The USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) rules state that the net length must be at least 20 feet extending from one sideline to the other.

Some clubs have taken down the tennis nets entirely and used pop-up pickleball nets, while others have modified their nets. (If tennis net posts are set into sleeves on the court, removal of the net post and capping of the resulting holes, will create a cleaner overall look for the surface). An image of a post removal illustrates the fact that this should be done by a qualified contractor. Remember that if the old tennis net posts are left in place, they may constitute a hazard to players on the court who will forget their presence.

(continued on Page 20)



Diagrams from Pickleball Courts: Construction & Maintenance Manual 2017 by the ASBA and USAPA. Drawings by Alex Levitsky.

Photo courtesy of Fred Kalkmann Tennis & Sport Surfaces, LLC, Grafton, WI

### Reconstruction (or New Construction) of Courts

Those who want to create a permanent space for pickleball courts have two options: building new courts (purpose-built for tennis or pickleball) somewhere on the property or taking out existing tennis courts and replacing them with pickleball courts. In all cases, a knowledgeable court contractor should be contacted in order to assist clubs with designing and building separate spaces.

If courts are going to be converted, or if new courts are being considered, work with user groups in advance to find out how many courts will be needed for each sport. The upside of having different facilities will be the club's ability to schedule play without worrying who is playing which sport and when, and on what court. It will also allow clubs to continue to host sanctioned tennis play without concerns about additional lines on the court.

If you can plan for some, or even all, of any necessary construction work to be done during any regular shutdown your club has, you will minimize disruption; it will also allow the contractor to address issues on other courts during the same period.

### Replacing Tennis Courts with Pickleball Courts

If pickleball courts will replace existing tennis courts, it is likely that the scope of work will include removal of the tennis net post footers, net, posts and center anchor, and placement of permanent pickleball net posts, footers and center anchor with the center strap set to 34 inches. The court lines will be removed, and the court resurfaced and relined.

In some cases, elements of the tennis courts can be repurposed, according to Fred Kolkman, CTCB, of Fred Kolkman Tennis & Sport Surfaces, LLC, in Grafton, Wisconsin. "We've converted a single tennis court in a park district to four pickleball courts," he notes. "It's not unusual, but we left the tennis

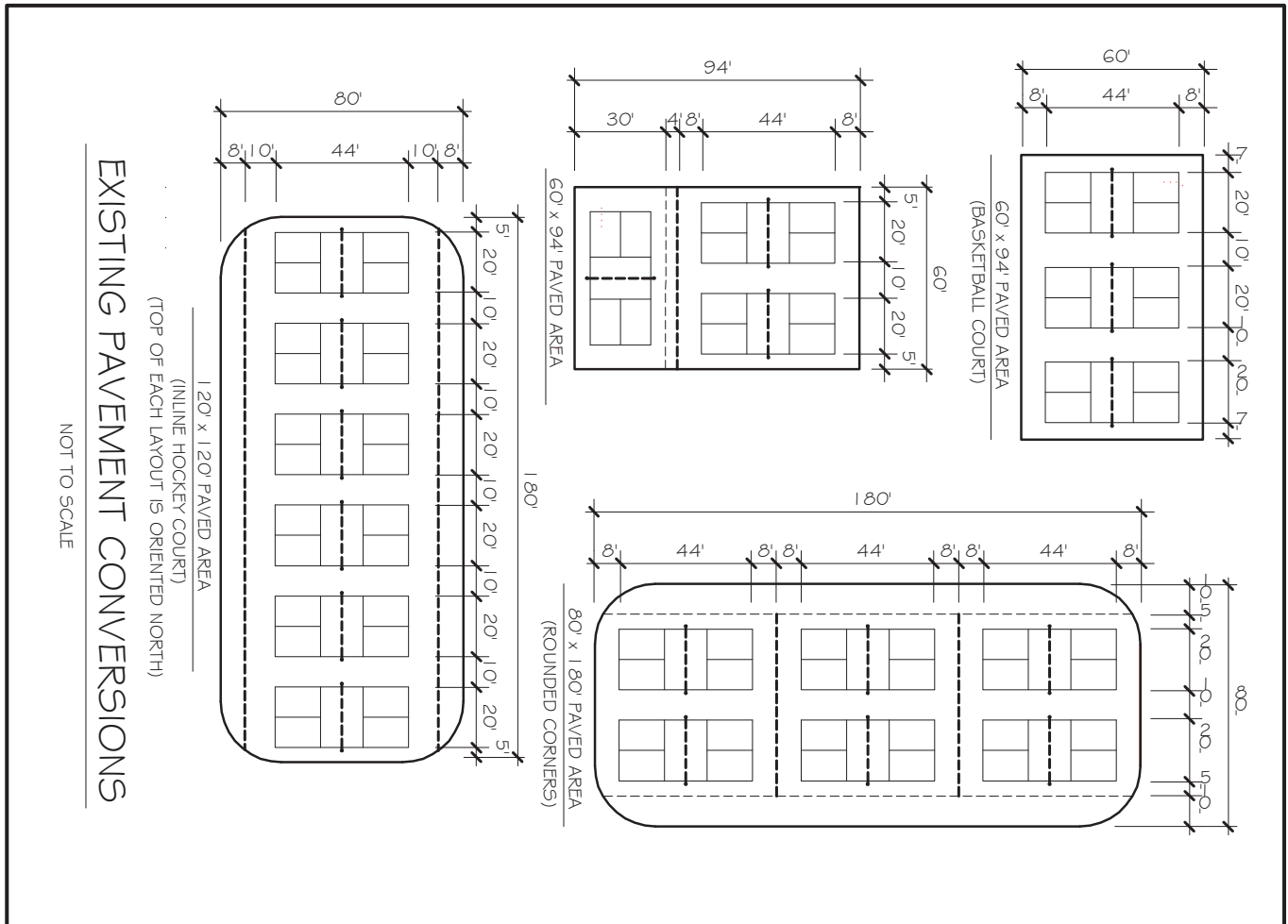
net posts in (the court was only one year old) and the park district is using the tennis net as a divider fence for the new pickleball courts. This avoided having to pay for a new divider fence and also didn't damage the court since we didn't pull the old footings. The photo shows the tennis net posts, but unfortunately the net wasn't up yet."

Court contractors note that depending on the number of pickleball courts to be put in, fences between courts (or in the case of indoor courts, drop-down curtains) will need to be moved as well. Check on the placement of all light fixtures to make sure the new courts are evenly illuminated.

If new court construction is planned (and this holds true for either tennis or pickleball courts), courts will be built from the ground up, and the scope of work will include excavation as well as work on the drainage, subbase, base and surface of all courts, and the installation of lighting, netting and fencing.

If the pickleball courts are outdoors and near any residences, some residents may be unaccustomed to the sound of the ball hitting the paddle. There are materials on the market that can help with noise abatement; be sure to discuss such issues with your contractor.

The American Sports Builders Association offers two publications that can be of assistance when considering new facilities at any level. *Pickleball Courts: A Construction & Maintenance Manual* provides an excellent background on understanding the design, construction, appointment and use of pickleball courts. It was written with assistance from the USAPA. Another ASBA publication, *Tennis Courts: A Construction and Maintenance Manual*, is produced in cooperation with the USTA and walks readers through the process of tennis court design and construction, including various surface opportunities. Both publications are available from ASBA's website and can be ordered in either a hard copy or a pdf.



Diagrams from Pickleball Courts: Construction & Maintenance Manual 2017 by the ASBA and USAPA. Drawings by Alex Levitsky.

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## HONORS



**Pablo Alvarado** (*left*) received two awards. USTA NorCal named Pablo its ROG Coach of the Year and the youth league he founded in Burlingame earned NorCal's Junior Local League of the Year.

**Vincent Liu** (*right*) received the Community Hero Award from the Baltimore Tennis Patrons.



**Michael Shires** received a Gold Star from USTA Missouri Valley for his contributions to Special Olympics.

## PTR MASTERS OF TENNIS

**PERFORMANCE**  
**Maria V. Francesa**, Seminole, FL

**ADULT DEVELOPMENT**  
**Kim DelFino**, New Smyrna Beach, FL



## COLLEGE

We missed this last season. **Kevin Jackson** led his Cairn University team to win the Colonial States Athletic Conference Championship and he was named CSAC Coach of the Year!

## NEW POSITIONS

**Hassan Humayun** was promoted to Director of Tennis at Anthem Country Club in Henderson, NV.

**Jay Gooding**, former ATP player and veteran Tour Coach, is the new Head Coach for the WTT Franchise, the Orlando STORM. Jay has been in Orlando for four years and is co-founder of the new Gooding Todero Academy (GTA) in the Lake Nona Sports District.

**David DiSesa** has been named Director of Racquets at Wianno Club in Osterville, Massachusetts.

Vermont, **Rob Parker** is the new Director of Tennis at the Chatham Bars Inn in Chatham, MA.

**Ramsey Hoehn** is the new Tennis Director at Windridge Tennis & Sports Camp. He is taking over the reins from his father, Ted, who founded the Roxbury, VT, camp in 1968.

**Tony Teufel** has joined the teaching staff at Forest Lake Tennis Club in Chesterfield, Missouri.

## HIGH SCHOOL



Trenton Catholic Academy Girls Tennis Team was started 13 years ago by volunteer coach **Don Swanson**. For the first time in school history, the team was 2019 BCSL Conference Champions. Don told us, "It was a total team effort."

**Errol Natrass** will run the VT High School Girls Individual State Championships at some point this year at Burlington Tennis Club.

## SIGHTINGS



**Johan du Randt**, PTR/PPR, now has four American Platform Tennis National (APTA) titles with three different partners, including, **Mark Parsons** in 2013 and 2014.

Congratulations to **Macie Elliott**, PTR/PPR, and **Marcela Rodezno**, PTR, who won the APTA National Women's Championship.



**Karen Ronney** (*left*) had a great time as the PTR Visiting Pro at Couples in Negril, Jamaica. Perfectly timed trip ended in mid-March, so she was able to return to California for the COVID-19 lockdown.



10th Annual Special Olympics Tennis Fun Day **Mark Pachtner** coordinated at Troon Country Club. More than 190 participants raised \$23K for Special Olympics Arizona. Mark developed Fun Day events with Special Olympics in California, Florida, Georgia and Arizona.





# Champions Adjust



**Ken DeHart** has a list of things he's doing during the pandemic. He created a safe drop off site at his home for members to bring racquets for stringing and grips. He even placed hand sanitizer at the drop off area. He's also stopping by the club periodically to check on the condition of the courts and equipment to ensure that when the time comes, the club is tennis ready!



As soon as they heard that schools were closing, **Carole and Jack Waite** spent a day with their children measuring and painting a regulation size pickleball court on to the driveway of their Connecticut home. They posted a fun video called Driveway of Dreams that you can see here.



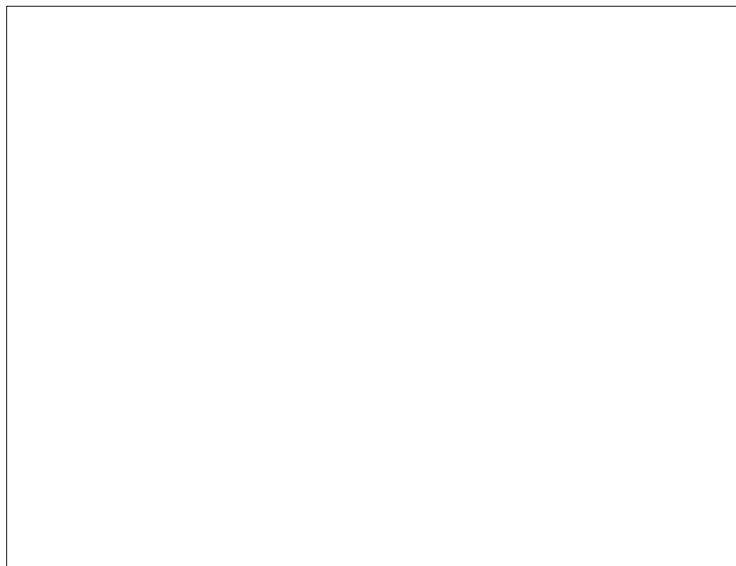
# 100 club

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Enjoy this Quarentennis Tennis Fitness video from **Elisabeth Cusack**, Tennis Director at Palmas Athletic Club in Palmas del Mar Resort in Humacao, Puerto Rico.





USA

## NEW EDUCATION! Online Instructor Certification

At the onset of the pandemic, PTR recognized the need for our members to be able to get certified without fear of being exposed to COVID-19. Work began immediately, and our online certification was born April 10. This allows members to acquire their education for certification in the safety of their own homes. It is more than seven hours of education spread over 29 unique video segments that can be done at the participant's pace. Visit [ptr.teachable.com](http://ptr.teachable.com)

## NEW EDUCATION FREE GameChangers Virtual Conference

More than 300 members from 30-plus countries were online for our first GameChangers Conference. Held entirely online with live interactive chats, it was a leap forward in PTR education. If you missed it, you can watch all or part of it anytime on the PTR Education Dashboard. Remember to accumulate continuing education credits, just answer a few questions at the end of each presentation.

- Carlos Carrera** - Interview with ATP player Roberto Quiroz Gomez
- Alex Covington** - Preparing for the Future: What to do after Junior Tennis
- David Botti** - Using college tennis as a tool to increase activity in academies and local clubs
- Christian Ducray** - Utilizing PTR Resources to help grow your career!
- Yanic Grant** - Adult Development: Short term coaching for long term results
- Karolina Lagerquist** - The Extra Mile - Real Impact Has No Shortcuts
- Liam Villante** - On-Court Junior Development Drills
- Emma Wells** - The Power of Branding and how to maximize for your business

## NEW EDUCATION FREE Webinar Series in English and en Español

We launched our new free PTR Webinar series April 15. With a different impactful topic every Wednesday on PTR's Facebook channel, it's a great way to learn from the experts and get Continuing Education credits. In case you missed any, you can always see them on our website - [ptrtennis.org](http://ptrtennis.org) - under the new Digital Resources tab on the menu bar.

For our Spanish speaking members, Milena Stephens hosts a Spanish webinar series with presentations by a variety of industry experts every *other* Tuesday (April 21, May 5, etc.) at 12:30pm EDT. These too can be found under the Digital Resources tab.

## NEW RULES! 15 Hours Continuing Education Requirement for US Members

To be certified, you must complete 15 hours of continuing education during designated three year cycles. The most recent was the three year period that ended December 31, 2019. The new three year cycle started January 1, 2020, and continues until December 31, 2022.

### What does that mean to you?

If you did not complete the continuing education during the last cycle, you must do that before you can accrue 15 hours of credit for the new cycle (2020-2022).

### FREE & Easy

PTR offers free online education so you can earn continuing education credits without leaving the house. Visit [www.ptrtennis.tv](http://www.ptrtennis.tv) to take advantage of a myriad of interesting and relevant presentations to fulfill the continuing education requirement. PTRtennis.tv automatically records your continuing education hours and adds them to your record.



In February, **Milena Stephens** and **Fernando Salazar** conducted the first part of Level 1 certification at Passion 4 Tennis in Miami.

## NEW PTR Hour & PTR Hour en Español

Coaches are really enjoying this free weekly interview series as Karl Hale and Lynne Rolley chat with some of our sport's top current and former players/coaches. These clever, fun and enlightening tete-a-tete conversations so far have been with the likes of Felix Auger-Aliassime, Roberto Bautista Agut, Belinda Bencic, James Blake, Genie Bouchard, Jim Courier, Lindsay Davenport, Gigi Fernandez, Brad Gilbert, John Isner, Milos Raonic, Pam Shriver, Stefanos Tsitsipas, the list goes on!

Hundreds of coaches and fans are joining us on Facebook every Thursday for PTR Hour, but in case you missed any, they are available on PTR's Facebook. For Continuing Education credits, visit the PTR Dashboard [ptrtennis.tv](http://ptrtennis.tv)

Leo Alonso hosts PTR Hour en Español every Tuesday at 12:30 EDT. See his interviews with Leonardo Mayer, Flavia Pennetta and others in Spanish on PTR's Facebook.

## FREE! Background Check & Safe Play Required

To be PTR certified, you must:

1. Complete Safe Play (every year) and acknowledge USTA Safe Play Policy
2. Have a criminal background check (every two years) via Safe Play

Background check compliance reports and Safe Play certificates must be emailed to [paige@ptrtennis.org](mailto:paige@ptrtennis.org)

To complete these for free, please visit [usta.com/safeplay](http://usta.com/safeplay) or register for Net Generation at [netgeneration.usta.com](http://netgeneration.usta.com)



CHINA



**Wang Yu Jia (Jessie)** conducted 11 to 17 Certification in Wuhan.



**Huang Chang Ming** conducted an 11 to 17 Certification in Nanjing.



**Joshua Robinson** conducted 10 & Under Certification in Jing De Zhen.



**James Huang** conducted 11 to 17 Certification in Ching Qing.



**Zhang Zhi Bin** conducted 10 & Under Certification in Dong Guan, Guangdong Province.



**Qian Rong** conducted 10 & Under Certification in Shanghai.



JAPAN

In mid-March, **Shinichi Suzuki** conducted an Adult Development Certification in both Japanese and English. Coaches from five countries participated in the workshop at Fairy Tennis Forum, PTR Japan Headquarters. **Masaru Satoh**, **Shojiro Matsubara** and **Yutaka Tokumaru** assisted. Four of Yutaka's students volunteered during the teaching test.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



**Marc Massad** organized a trip to Dubai for our International Director, **Iñaki Balzola**. Iñaki conducted two certification workshops - 11 to 17 and Performance - in late February.

# BBB Scoring



*by Marcelo Chanes*

*A PTR Professional, Marcelo teaches tennis at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside in Louisiana. He has been in tennis for 40 years, first as a junior player in his native Santiago, Chile, then as a college player for Tennessee Tech University. In July, Marcelo will celebrate his 21st anniversary as a tennis coach.*

In my 20 years as a tennis professional, I have come to realize how imperative it is for a player to compete. Being able to play big points differentiates a recreational player from a serious competitive player. By big points, I mean a game that goes something like this: 40-0, 40-15, 40-30, 0-40, 15-40, 30-40, Ad-IN, Ad-OUT.

I define a 'big point' as the point that allows a player to either win or lose a game. Big points are significant and account for almost 50% of tennis' total points (8 out of 18). As a result of the importance of these points, and while coaching my son's high school match, I observed that the majority of the players on his team were not competing - or even focusing - until the score reached a big point. During practice matches and in competition, these kids didn't come alive until a big point.

The players' level of intensity at scores like 0-0, 15-0, 0-15, 15-15, 15-30, 30-15, 30-30 and Deuce was considerably less than during the eight big points.

As a coach, I wanted to address this, which led me to think outside of the box. I came up with the idea of creating a scoring system in which players practice being in 'big point' situations without having to focus on any preceding points. This would maximize the limited amount of practice time by using it solely to the work on big points.

### BBB Scoring

I call my system BBB Scoring, which stands for BIG players, BIG points, BIG matches. I have implemented this scoring system over the past few years in many of my junior and adult lessons, clinics and practices. Not only do I receive incredibly positive feedback, but more importantly, I see unbelievable growth for all of my players. The results really show in competition!

I am sharing this because I believe my system could help you with all your students too. From beginners to advanced players, we can facilitate the future stars of our sport at the collegiate, national and international levels, especially those who aspire to play on the ATP or WTA tours, where the difference among players is their ability to master the 'big points'.

With BBB Scoring, players are focusing primarily on the big points, which are essential when competing at a high level, and usually make the difference between winning or losing a close match. Depending on the number of rallies, a set using BBB Scoring can be played in approximately 12-15 minutes. I've timed more than 100 sets using BBB Scoring and the average set was played in 13 minutes 32 seconds. BBB Scoring also limits the total number of points played to 9 per game, since the scoring combines regular AD scoring and NO-AD scoring within the same game.

The BBB Scoring works as follows.

#### Game 1

Player A serves at 40-0 and finishes the game.  
If game gets to Deuce, players play regular AD scoring.  
If game gets to Deuce for the second time,  
NO-AD is used and receiver's choice for serving side.

#### Game 2

Player B serves at 40-0 and repeats steps of Game 1.

#### Game 3

Player A serves at 0-40 and finishes the game.

#### Game 4

Player B serves at 0-40 and finishes the game.

#### Game 5

Player A serves at 40-15 and finishes the game.

#### Game 6

Player B serves at 40-15 and finishes the game.

#### Game 7 (if needed)

Player A serves at 15-40 and finishes the game.

#### Game 8 (if needed)

Player B serves at 15-40 and finishes the game.

#### Game 9 (if needed)

Player A serves at 40-30 and finishes the game.

#### Game 10 (if needed)

Player B serves at 40-30 and finishes the game.

#### Game 11 (if needed)

Player A serves at 30-40 and finishes the game.

#### Game 12 (if needed)

Player B serves at 30-40 and finishes the game.

If needed, and after the end of 12 games, when the score is tied 6-6, there are 2 options:

1. Keep the tie and take a two minute break and move on to another set.
2. If time allows, play a regular tie-breaker or a 10 point tie-breaker, then move to the next set.

In my experience, it is possible to play 5-6 sets in a 90 minute session. Doing so allows players to play multiple big points and exposes them to a variety of scoring situations that are crucial to becoming great, competitive players.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this. I hope it will help many players become much better competitors in the game that I love.



## Ask the Ball Machine Expert

Stan Oley is the Product Marketing Specialist for Playmate Tennis Machines. He is a PTR Professional and USPTA Master Professional. Stan has presented at conferences worldwide, including PTR symposia, and is an expert on maximizing the benefits of utilizing a ball machine.

### Q: What do you recommend in terms of Ball Machine Maintenance?

Preventative Maintenance is critical in extending the potential lifespan of your ball machine. Upon purchase of a new vehicle, the dealership informs you of the maintenance necessary to keep your vehicle running according to factory standards. Failing to follow the planned maintenance program for your vehicle or your ball machine could dramatically affect its life expectancy as well as cause pre-mature catastrophic failures. Planned maintenance procedures are based on usage in one-hour increments, similar to mileage on a vehicle. Most Commercial Ball Machines are utilized an average of **20 hours a week** totaling **1,040 hours a year**, throwing approximately **780,000 balls**.

#### Preventative Maintenance

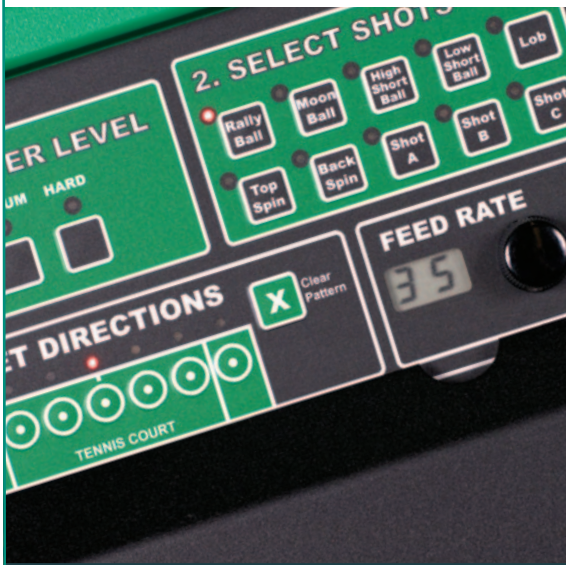
If your ball machine is used **more than 20 hours** a week, preventative maintenance should be done **once a week**, and if your ball machine is used **less than 20 hours** a week, preventative maintenance should be done **every other week**.

It is recommended to wear a mask and protective eyewear during these procedures.

1. With machine unplugged from electricity, place machine tilted upside down on a box or ball hopper to prevent damaging any antennae.
2. Clean inside rims of pitching wheels with a dry cloth. This helps eliminate vibration and premature wheel replacement.
3. Blow out debris from cabinet interior with a leaf blower. This removes build-up of debris (sometimes corrosive) around important machine components.
4. Turn machine right side up and blow out debris from around feeding disc.

#### Professional Maintenance and Budgeting

It is very important that your machine is seen by an Authorized Sales and Service Center on at least an annual basis to ensure that it is running at factory standards. **It is also critical to budget for such visits, repairs, with possible replacement recommendations from rep.**



# iGENIE

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